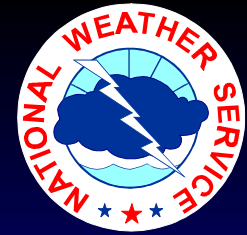
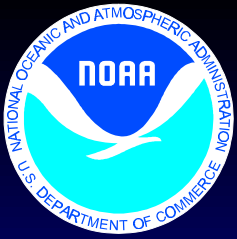


The Hidden Danger: Low-Water Crossings



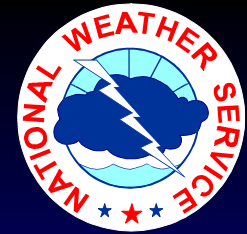
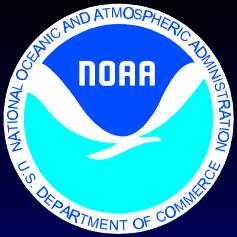


A low-water crossing is where a road, without a bridge, dips across a normally dry creek bed or drainage area.



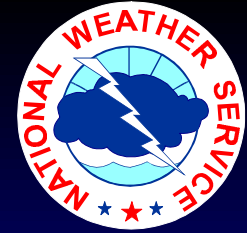
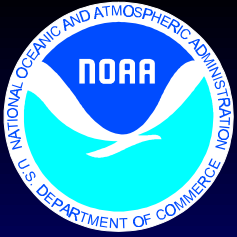
copyright 1990 philg@mit.edu

Courtesy: Philip Greenspun, <http://photo.net/philg/>



Courtesy: San Antonio Express News

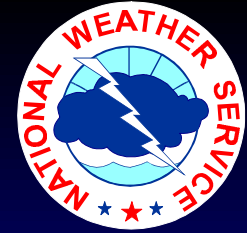
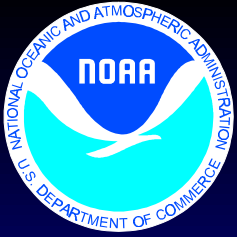
Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle related.



Few people appreciate the power of running water. Small streams can rise quickly and flood a highway creating a dangerous situation.



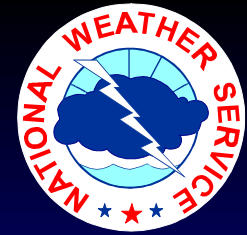
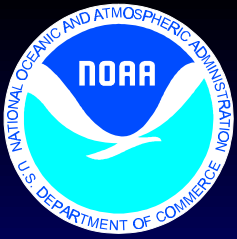
Courtesy: Lower Colorado River Authority



The difference in many cases is inches. A small increase in the water level may produce enough buoyancy to float your vehicle.

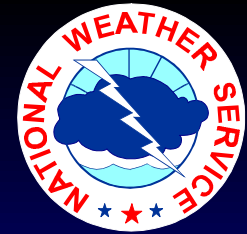
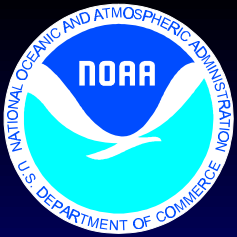


Courtesy: Lower Colorado River Authority

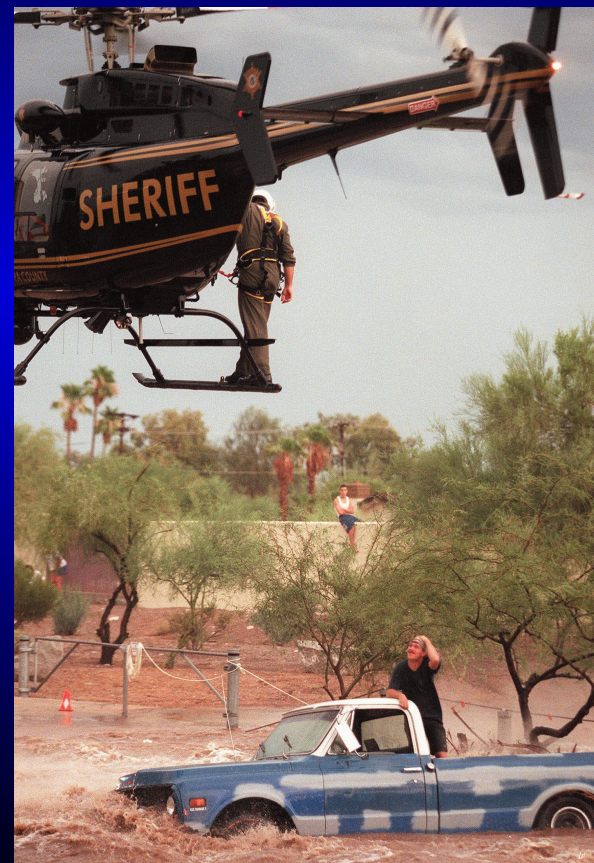


As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

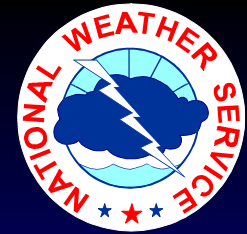
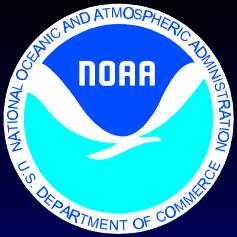




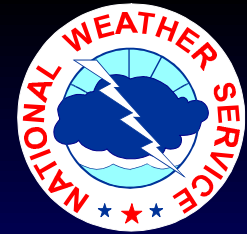
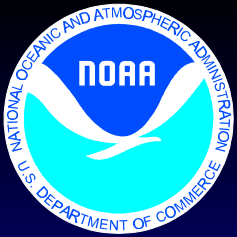
Two feet of water will carry most vehicles away.



Courtesy: Arizona Republic. Pete Scanlon

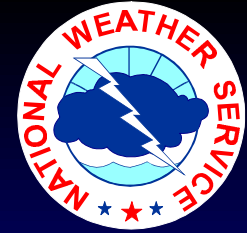
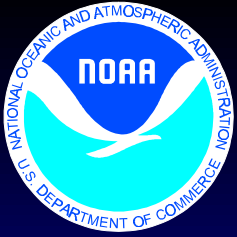


When a vehicle stalls in the water, the water's momentum is transferred to the car.

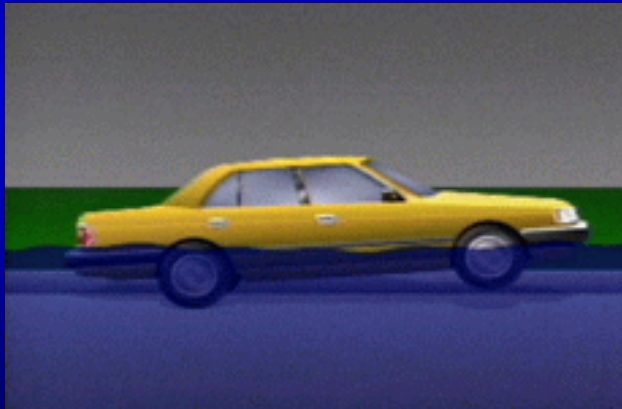


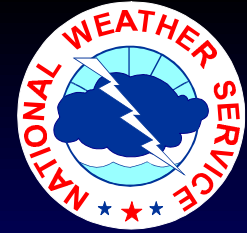
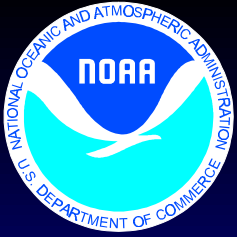
For each foot the water rises,
500 pounds of lateral force
is applied to the car.





The biggest factor is buoyancy. A car weighs 1,500 less for each foot the water rises.

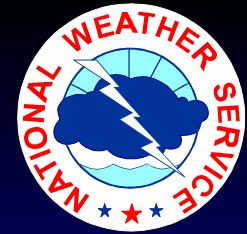
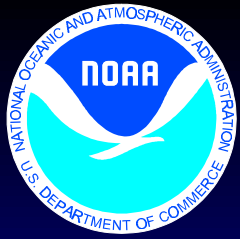




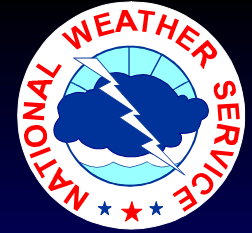
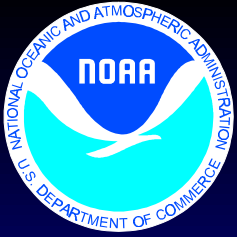
People who have previously driven successfully through a flooded low-water crossing often do not recognize that an increase of an inch or so in the water level may be all it takes to tip the balance of buoyancy against them.



Courtesy: KENS-TV



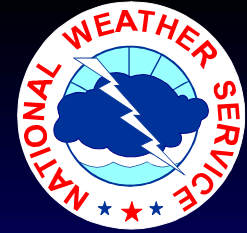
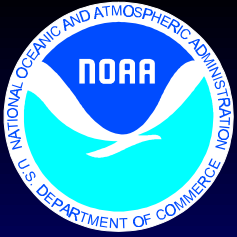
More than half of all low-water crossing vehicular deaths take place at night when visibility is limited, increasing the vulnerability of the driver.



Driving too fast through low water will cause the vehicle to hydroplane and lose contact with the road surface.



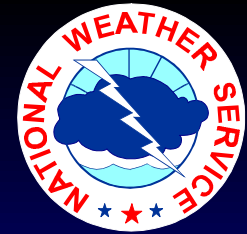
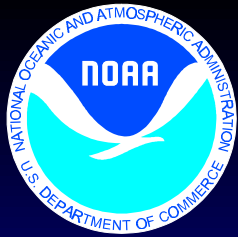
Courtesy: Lower Colorado River Authority



Be aware that road beds
may be washed away under
the flood waters.



Courtesy: Lower Colorado River Authority



Safety Rules

Heed all flood and flash flood warnings issued by the National Weather Service.

Do not drive around barricades at low-water crossings.

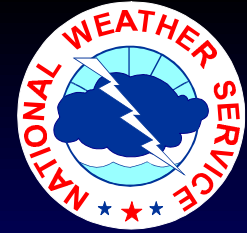
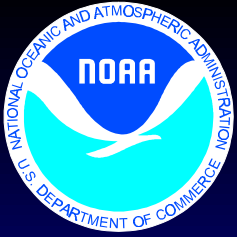
Be especially vigilant at night or when traveling on unfamiliar roads.

Do not cross flowing water.

Observe rising water indicators at low-water crossings. Six inches of water may cause loss of control of your vehicle.

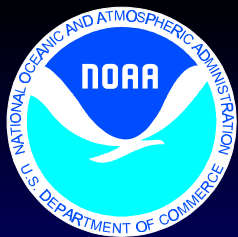
Be aware that road beds may be washed away under the flood waters.

If you choose to abandon your vehicle; respect the force of moving water. Remember, six inches of fast-moving water will knock you off your feet.

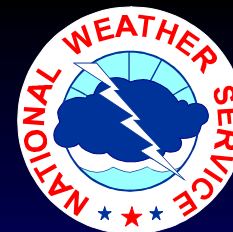


Rising waters over roadways
pose a threat to life and
property. Don't take chances
at low-water crossings.





For More Information Contact:



National Weather Service
Office of Hydrology
SSMC-2, Rm 8115
1325 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

or

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oh/tt/xwater/index.shtml>